

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

S E C R E T STATE 066276

FOLLOWING REPEAT BISSAU 0227, SENT SECSTATE 23 FEB:

QUOTE S E C R E T BISSAU 0227

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: MASS, PU

SUBJECT: GUINEA-BISSAU MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO POLISARIO

REF: (A) STATE 34892, (B) STATE 34893

1. REFTELS REFER TO REPORTS THAT GUINEA-BISSAU IS ASSISTING WITH TRAINING OF POLISARIO TROOPS AND ACTING AS SUPPLY BASE. WE HAVE NO HARD INFORMATION TO CONFIRM OR DENY THESE REPORTS BUT SUBMIT FOLLOWING COMMENTS FOR CONSIDERATION.

2. REFERENCED RUMORS ARE FAIRLY COMMON CURRENCY IN DAKAR, AND DIPLOMATIC VISITORS FROM DAKAR TO BISSAU ASK ABOUT IT.

3. WE HAVE CHECKED OUT STORY WITH FRENCH CHARGE (WHO INSTRUCTED HIS AID CHIEF TO PUT FRENCH AID WORKERS ON TO STORY.) CHARGE SERIOUSLY DOUBTS THAT
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STORY HAS ANY BASIS IN FACT AND HAS SO REPORTED TO PARIS. HE SEES NO SIGNS OF ACTIVITY OF ANY IMPORTANCE OR OF PRESENCE OF POLISARIO TROOPS. IN PARTICULAR, TRANSPORT OF MATERIAL WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT GIVEN PAUCITY OF TRANSPORT MEANS. USE OF SOVIET TRAWLERS MIGHT BE FEASIBLE, BUT DIFFICULT TO HIDE.

4. MOST IMPORTANT IN FRENCH CHARGE'S MIND IS HIS BELIEF THAT GOGB UNLIKELY TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS TYPE OF ACTIVITY. GOGB HAS CONSISTENTLY ATTEMPTED TO MAINTAIN RELATIONS WITH MAURITANIA AND MORROCCO WHILE MAKING NO EFFORT TO HIDE THEIR MORAL AND POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR POLISARIO. GOGB RETAINS EMOTIONAL AFFILIATION TO LIBERATION MOVEMENTS BUT SHOWS EVERY SIGN OF LIMITING SUPPORT TO OVERT POLITICAL ACITIVITY.

5. I AM INCLINED TO AGREE WITH FRENCH CHARGE. TROOP TRAINING IN ANY SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS AND PROVISION OF MATERIAL STRIKES ME AS UNLIKELY ACTIVITY FOR PRESENT GOGB GOVERNMENT.

6. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT A SMALL POLITICAL-MILITARY TRAINING PROGRAM IS UNDERWAY OR BEING CNSIDERED, WHICH WOULD INVOLVE A VERY LIMITED NUMBER OF POLISARIO ELEMENTS AND WOULD BE CONDUCTED WITHIN THE CONFINES OF THE CLOSE MILITARY RELATIONS WHICH EXIST BETWEEN THE GOGB ARMY, CUBANS, SOVIETS AND POLISARIO, AND WHICH WOULD NOT RPT NOT BE PRESENTED TO THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP FOR APPROVAL. I DOUBT IF SUCH A PROGRAM, HOWEVER, WOULD INVOLVE ARMS SHIPMENTS AND LARGE SCALE TRAINING SUCH AS THAT REQUIRED FOR ANTI-AIRCRAFT PURPOSES. IN SUM, THE REFERENCED REPORTS SHOULD BE VIEWED
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CAUTIOUSLY PENDING SOME CONFIRMATION. MARKS UNQUOTE. VANCE

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